



Coalition

Scimitar

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Ceremony Recognizes New Iraqi Commissioned Officers

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Mark Bell
372nd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD — The Iraqi Civil Defense Corps officially welcomed and recognized its new commissioned officers during a formal ceremony taking place at Martyrs' Monument.

"Today is a historic day for these men, for their families, for Baghdad and for the people of Iraq," Brig. Gen. Martin Dempsey, 1st Armored Division commander, told those on hand who observed the event.

Dempsey stressed the importance of the ICDC soldiers' role in securing and preserving their country's freedom.

"Today these men will swear an oath before God to take responsibility for the security of their nation," Dempsey said of the nine ICDC officers being commissioned. "We



As a sign of solidarity against the war on terrorism, 1st Armored Division and Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) commanders hold hands during the inaugural ICDC commissioning ceremony held at Martyr's Monument.

salute them for their bravery. We honor them for their patriotism, and we promise that we will stand with them against the enemies of freedom."

With the raising of their right hands, the officers recited the oath.

Afterward, the nine were "pinned" with their new insignia of rank by Dempsey and their perspective brigade and battalion commanders.

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An Old Soldier, A New Army



Photo by Sgt. Brian Stockhoff, 204th MPAD

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Coalition uses new method to raise electrical pylons.

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Buddies reunited

Two different roads leads back to one another.

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Airmen return to finish

Group of airmen return to Iraq 13 years later.

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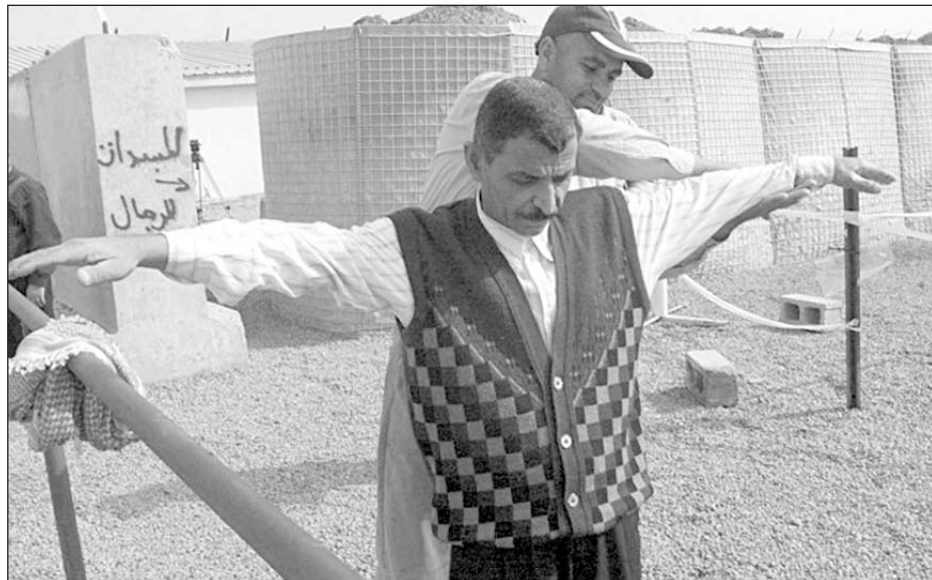
Coalition Generals Meet in Babylon

Maj. Gen. Andrew Stuart, British Commanding General, Multinational Division South-East visited the Multinational Division Center South HQ. On the landing zone Polish Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Mieczyslaw Bieniek, Multinational Division Central South greeted him.

At the Coalition Camp HQ in Camp Babylon he received a briefing about the operations and actions of the MND CS.. Both division Commanding Generals spoke about very important points for future cooperation between the two neighboring sectors in Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Photo by Lt. Col. Anton Fillo /SVK



An Iraqi Civil Defense Corps soldier searches a workman before allowing him to pass through a gate at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad.

MP Soldiers Work Hand-in-Hand With ICDC Guarding Gate

Story and photo by
Spc. Chad D. Wilkerson
372nd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD — Protecting an entire military post from enemy attack is a job that military police offices from the 143rd Military Police Company and their Iraqi Civil Defense Corps colleagues take very seriously.

The 143rd, an Army National Guard unit from Hartford, Conn., part of Task Force 1st Armored Division, is responsible for a gate to Forward Operating Base Falcon, home of 1st Armored Division Artillery. With the help of some fellow soldiers from the ICDC, they screen all incoming vehicles and personnel for possible threats to the safety of the post.

"We are maintaining overall security for this post," said Sgt. Kevin Arrojo, team leader with 1st Platoon, 143rd MP Company. "With the present threat of (improvised explosive devices), car bombs and overall terrorist attacks, our presence is absolutely necessary."

The gate is a multilayered defense with high-walled perimeters and lookout towers to deter any threat, said Arrojo. Like any military fortification, however, the gate relies heavily on manpower — U.S. and Iraqi manpower.

"We have several lines of defense here at the gate, and the ICDC personnel here are American-trained to help us out with screenings and traffic control," said Arrojo. "These ICDC (soldiers) are professional and do an excellent job out

here."

The presence of ICDC service members is surprising to many Iraqis who enter through the gate and (they) stand as a statement to would-be attackers and members of the community, said Spc. Armando Bettini, military policeman with the 143rd.

"Their presence shows the Iraqis that we are serious about integrating Iraqis into the country's security," said Bettini. "Development, coexistence and training with ICDC personnel show Iraqis that we are not leaving until our mission is complete."

It also shows that the Iraqis are taking a greater role in their country's security.

As they enter the gate, drivers are ordered to slow their vehicle and prepare to be searched. Signs written in English and Arabic spell out the consequences of ignoring orders from gate personnel or for trying to run through or avoid the checkpoint.

All "pat-down" searches are performed by ICDC servicemen under the MPs' supervision.

Bettini said that all security searches are conducted with the safety of FOB Falcon's Soldiers' safety in mind, allowing the Soldiers to relax in their living areas during and after carrying out their daily activities.

"We keep the forward operating base safe so troops can feel safe in a secure environment," said Bettini.

Luckily, the gate has not had any direct-attack incidents under the 143rd, said Arrojo, but the MPs and ICDC soldiers are always alert, prepared and ready for any challenge.

Bayonet Brigade Hands Reins Over to Warrior Brigade

By Spc. Sean Kimmons
25th Infantry Division (Light)
Public Affairs Office

KIRKUK AIR BASE — Nearly a year after parachuting into enemy territory, the 173rd Airborne Brigade was relieved of its area of operations by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division (Light).

"Today marks the official transfer of authority for the Al Tamin and Al Sulayminiah provinces from the Bayonet Brigade to the Warrior Brigade," said Col. Lloyd Miles, 2nd BCT commander. "This transfer of authority is indeed a visible symbol of America's unwavering commitment to the people of Iraq."

The 2nd BCT becomes the first brigade-sized element from the 25th Infantry Division (Light) to operate in a combat zone since the Vietnam War. Nearly 3,000 Soldiers from 2nd BCT are spread out over Northern Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

More than 1,000 Soldiers from 45th Corps Support Group (Forward) and Aviation Bde. are also supporting operations in Northern Iraq.

Miles said the 2nd BCT's mission will change the lives of its Soldiers forever.

"Over the course of the next year, you will be more than just peacekeepers. At times, you will also be ambassadors in uniform, negotiators, teachers, friends [and more]," Miles said. "You are superbly trained and led, and I am confident that you will advance the democratic process and add another story to the proud history of your unit."

Col. William Mayville, 173rd Airborne Bde. commander, welcomed the 2nd BCT and ensured them that their time here will be worthwhile and challenging.

"This land will test your skills as Soldiers, as well as challenge your pursuit for peace. But I am confident that you will be successful in every endeavor," he said.

Soldiers of 173rd

Airborne Bde. are ready to redeploy home to Vicenza, Italy, but heading home with missions still ongoing and saying goodbye to new friends will leave most with mixed emotions, Mayville said.

"We are anxious to go home and be with our loved ones, but at the same time we have invested much of ourselves over the past year," Mayville said.

Unfinished or not, Soldiers of 173rd Airborne Bde. left their mark in history.

"You have shown the Iraqi people what it means to be Americans," Mayville said. "You have liberated this province and unshackled the Iraqi people."

"In the aftermath of conflict, you have restored the municipal services, health and education. You have created police, public safety and ICDC [Iraqi Civil Defense Corps] forces," Mayville added.

Leaders from both brigades, and representatives from the ICDC and Iraqi police formed with their guidons outside of the tactical operations center during the ceremony. Miles said for both forces to stand in formation together representing their missions with one another.

"It is appropriate that in this ceremony, Coalition Forces are standing shoulder to shoulder with Iraqi security of the ICDC and Iraqi police, for this is the road to the future," Miles said.

Miles also expressed hope for a brighter future to the Iraqi people but said it would not be an easy task.

"Never again must the forces of terror, tyranny and brutality be allowed to rule this land," he said.



Col. Lloyd Miles, 2nd BCT commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jerry Taylor, uncasing the brigade's colors at the TOA ceremony.

The newest place to access the latest
CJTF-7 News and Information
online is at its new site. A simple click to
www.cjtf7.army.mil will keep you informed.

Unsung Heroes

Marching the extra mile across Iraq



Cpl. Garcia

Cpl. Marcelo Garcia, 24, has been in the Marine Corps. for five and a half years. He is with the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force from Camp Pendleton, Calif.

He signed up to experience what it was like to be a Marine. He has been deployed to Baghdad for two months. He works with the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team. He takes care of all administrative support and billeting for the command that is going to train the entire Iraqi army.

Sgt. Humberto Dominguez said that "he's a good worker, who makes things happen." "He's adapted well to this joint environment."



Staff Sgt. Greer

Staff Sgt. Marcia E. Greer was born in Panama. Greer's home town is Ft. Bragg, N.C. She has been in the army almost 12 years. She is a member of the 126th Finance Battalion, 336th Finance Command.

Greer, the non commissioned officer in charge, joined the military because she wanted to follow in her father's footsteps. Her father was a linguist with the 96th Civil Affairs. She is in charge of paying all the contractors, both DOD and the Iraqis.

"Sgt Greer is here to help people and realizes that other people have a lot to deal with and she tries to help them with finance when they come in," said 1st Lt. Gary A. Drozdowski. He added that, "she's very patient and works well as part of a team."

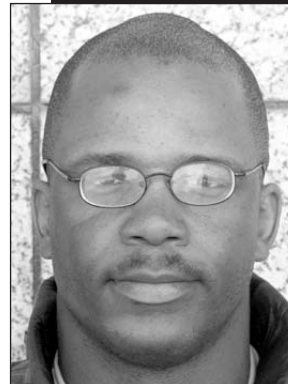


Pvt. McKeever

Pvt. Adam McKeever, 15th Finance Support Bn., 1st Cavalry Division based out of Fort Hood, Texas, is a promotions clerk for camp victory. He has been in the army about one year.

When he gets out wants to be a high school history teacher. "I wasn't mature enough to handle college. Joining the army not only helped me mature, but gave me the money to go when I was ready."

Sgt. Tyrone North, supervisor, said "he is a hard worker and takes initiative when he sees something has to get done. "He's a good guy and willing to go the extra mile for the team."



Sgt. Webster

Sgt. Raymond L. Webster, 27, is from Oakdale, La. He has been in the army for eight and a half years and is assigned to the 3rd Howitzer Battery 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment from Fort Polk, LA.

Webster, who stepped up as a section chief, is responsible for eight Soldiers. He supervises them and ensures that they have everything they need to do the right thing. "It's been a great experience," he said. "I got to meet a lot of people and see things I normally would not see in the states."

Spc. Nicholas H. Threlkeld, one of the Soldiers under Webster, said that "he'll stop everything at the drop of a hat to help a Soldier out." He added, "he's a Soldier first."

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Coalition Scimitar
welcomes units to submit
their own Unsung Heroes.
Photos and short summaries
of accomplishments should
be sent to
[cpiccmdinfo@
baghdadforum.com](mailto:cpiccmdinfo@baghdadforum.com)

Coalition Forces Re-erect Looted Electrical Pylons with New Method



Cpl Jimmy Millin, RLC.

British Army engineers and a crew from the Royal Air Force used a Chinook helicopter to lower a repaired pylon back into place outside Az Zubayr.



Cpl Jimmy Millin, RLC.

Members of 37 Squadron Royal Engineers guide a pylon for electricity back to its original position.



Cpl Jimmy Millin, RLC.

A Chinook Helicopter lifts an electrical pylon into the air by hoist and places it in the correct spot. The process took roughly 30 minutes.

Story by Jonathan Turner
Information Officer MND (SE)

BASRAH — Vital repairs to electricity lines in southern Iraq are set to accelerate after Coalition Forces perfected a new method of replacing damaged pylons.

British Army engineers and a crew from the Royal Air Force used a Chinook helicopter to lower a repaired pylon back into place outside Az Zubayr.

The new technique means pylons can also be replaced in the southern Marshes, where the ground is too boggy for conventional cranes.

The Chinook helicopter from 1310 Flight, based at Basrah airport, took 30 minutes to lift the 4.5 ton pylon and lower it into place. On the ground soldiers from 37 Armoured Engineer Squadron and Iraqi engineers from the Ministry of Electricity pinned the pylon into place.

The job took close coordination between the helicopter and the ground, especially as winds were gusting to 30 knots.

Squadron Leader Simon Paterson piloted the Chinook. He said it took a lot of concentration to get the pylon in place.

"We literally had to move it inch by inch to get in there," he said. "It was about as difficult as I thought it would be. We're very pleased we managed to get it where it had to go."

Major Alex Hilton, 37th Armoured Engineer Squadron, said that by using the helicopter pylons could be replaced in places which were otherwise totally inaccessible.

"This method is a lot faster than trying to rebuild a pylon and re-erect it by hand," he said. "Many of the pylons also have to go into the marshes, and this will make it a lot easier to do that."

"There are 30 pylons to erect between here and Al Faw. The quicker we can get the pylons up the quicker we can get lines up and get electricity to people."

The Iraqi Ministry of Electricity is also working hard to repair the damaged power-lines, which were demolished by looters looking for copper cables.

"The new cables will be aluminium, not copper, so hopefully they will not be a target for looters," Maj Hilton said.

The lines will also be guarded by the military and security forces from the Ministry of Electricity.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld Tours Iraqi Civil Defense Academy

Story and photo by
Capt. Sean P. Kirley
Armored Cavalry Regiment
Public Affairs Office

BAGHDAD — The Office of the Secretary of Defense sent word to the military leadership in Iraq earlier this month: The Hon. Donald Rumsfeld, U.S. Secretary of Defense, was coming to Iraq, and he specifically wanted to see the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, which is assigned to Task Force 1st Armored Division.

The communiqué continued: The Secretary of Defense, in addition to meeting with the Regiment's troopers, was interested in seeing the Iraqi Civil Defense Academy at Camp Muleskinner.

The Hon. Rumsfeld arrived at Camp Muleskinner at 9:30 a.m. Feb. 24 with 35 people in his entourage, including Lt. Gen. John Craddock, the senior military advisor to the Secretary of Defense.

The 2nd ACR's ICDC acade-

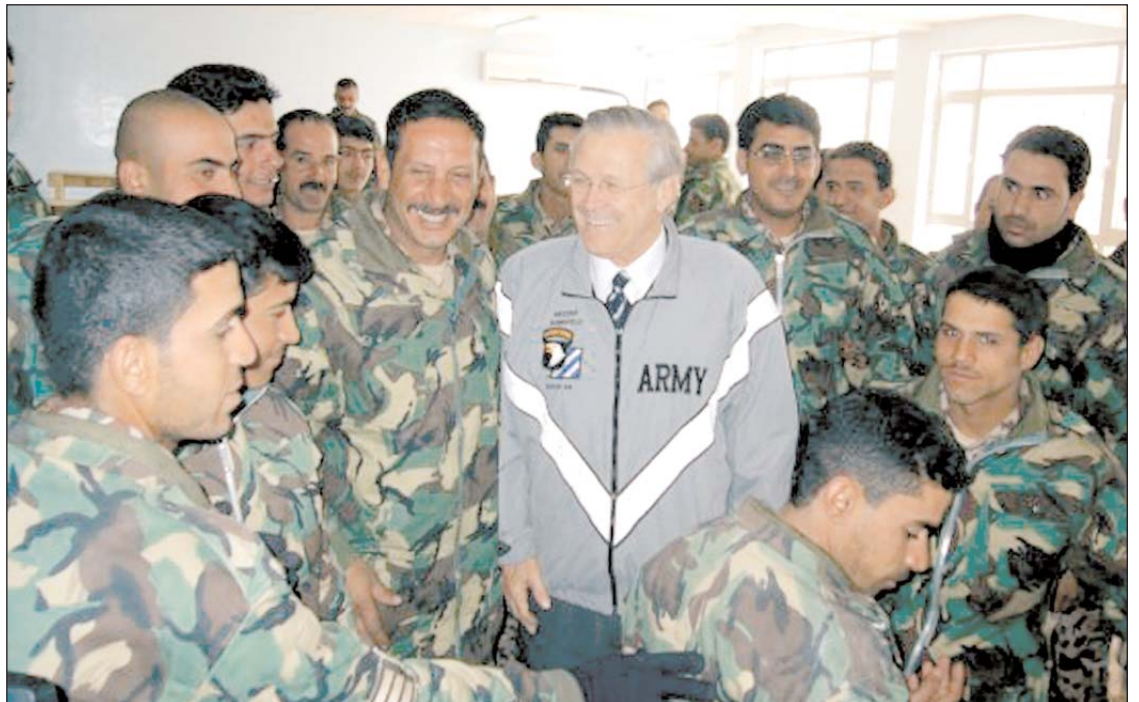
my has trained more than 1,500 new guardsmen who have been integrated into operations in support of their country and communities.

The cadre at the ICDC Academy is made up predominately of Dragoon and 1st Armored Division Non-Commissioned Officers and Soldiers.

The Secretary of Defense wanted to see how well Iraqis were responding to the call from the world to take charge of their country.

Upon arrival by helicopter, Col. Brad May, the regimental commander, and Lt. Col. Jack Curran, regimental support squadron commander, greeted Mr. Rumsfeld.

On hand for the event were Brig. Gen. Martin Dempsey, 1st Armored Division commanding general, Brig. Gen. Mark Hertling, assistant division commander for support, and Brig. Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti, assistant division commander for maneuver.



U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld meets with Iraqi Civil Defense Corps soldiers at Camp Muleskinner during a tour of the facility. The secretary also met with Soldiers of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment "Dragoons."

The secretary was given an overview briefing on the state of security in Baghdad. Information presented included discussions on the Iraqi contingency and reports on the ICDC and the Iraqi Police Service.

Mr. Rumsfeld said he was pleased with the course of action in training the Iraqi volunteers and the numbers of ICDC soldiers and police officers that are projected to be available to serve their country in the near future.

The next stop was the ICDC Academy.

The secretary spent about 30 minutes touring the facility, talk-

ing with the cadre, and thanking the trainees for their service.

"I am so proud of you all for what you are doing for your country," he said. "The future of Iraq is in your hands."

He also complimented the cadre for their tireless work, presenting many of them with his official commemorative coin. He spent about 10 minutes posing for pictures and talking with the large group of Soldiers that had gathered outside to see him.

"He was very cool," said one Soldier. "Sometimes these guys get so involved with stuff way above our heads that what it

means to us that he actually came out here gets lost in translation. You could tell he is proud of us and that means a lot."

As the 2nd ACR Dragoons prepared to come home to Fort Polk, La., after a year in Baghdad in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, little surprises the troopers these days.

They have seen and been through so much working with the people of Baghdad and making life better for them. The Soldiers have worked hard making the camps that they operate a comfortable, safe place for follow-on troops.

354th Civil Affairs Brigade Leaves Big Shoes to Fill

Story and photo by Sgt. Brian Stockhoff
204th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD — The 354th Civil Affairs Brigade's role as a builder of Iraq has come to an end. They have been in country for almost a year and now it is time for them to get back to their families. The 354th, based in Riverdale, MD, provided civil affairs command and control in the Baghdad area of operations for the 3rd Infantry Division and the 1st Armored Division.



Col. Jeffrey A. Jacobs, the 354th Civil Affairs Brigade company commander, cases the brigade's colors.

The brigade was comprised of the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion and the 414th Civil Affairs Battalion.

The brigade worked with maneuver brigades, the Government Support Team (GST), the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), International Organizations, the Iraqi Assistance Center (IAC), and Iraqi citizens to accomplish their mission.

The brigade played a key role in many operations throughout their year here. Brig. Gen. Martin Dempsey, commanding general of 1st AD, said that "you (the 354th) brought Baghdad back to life." He added that "a city of 5.5 million people owe the normalcy of their lives to you. I hope you are proud of that accomplishment as I am of you."

A few of the improvements they helped accomplish were the re-establishment of port operations and the Oil-for Food distribution system in the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr. They aided in the re-establishing of food distribution in Baghdad and establishing the Iraqi Business Center. They helped restore the Baghdad Zoo, recovered museum artifacts, helped assess Baghdad public hospitals and worked to re-supply healthcare facilities with medical equipment and supplies. They organized the first stock exchange in Baghdad and facilitated banknote exchange. Dempsey said that they have set Baghdad on a

course toward freedom.

"You have made the world safer for your own families, and you have made this part of the world safer for future generations of Iraqis," he said. "I am proud to have had the opportunity to serve with you in Iraq. We have been a historic, winning team."

Brig. Gen. Dempsey said, "You have fought the good fight and carried the torch proudly. Now it is time to pass the torch on."

The brigade will turn over the operation to the 350th Operational Planning Team. "I have no doubt you are ready to continue the mission with us," said Dempsey. "The citizens of Baghdad are counting on us. Your fellow Soldiers deserve your best effort. The cause of freedom demands it."

Col. Jeffrey A. Jacobs, 354th Civil Affairs Brigade company commander, said, "I can assure you that you will only see continued improvement in your civil affairs force."

"We are not home yet, although we have completed our mission with the 1st AD, we still have, as every unit in the army has, a mission," said Jacobs.

Jacobs said his greatest personal experience was assuming command of the brigade and ended the ceremony by saying, "My soldiers and I will proudly wear the old ironsides' patch on our shoulders."

New Brigadier Appointed for Iraqi Civil Defense Corps

Story by Jonathan Turner
Information Officer MND (SE)

BASRAH — The new commander of the Iraqi Civil Defence Corps' 70th Brigade has been appointed in Basrah.

Brigadier Dhia Kadom Jawad Al-

Kadony, 53, has taken command of around 5,000 Iraqi troops, who have been trained by the British Army and other Coalition forces. His appointment is a major milestone in the development of the ICDC.

Brig. Dhia is from Basrah, and was formerly a Brigadier in the Marine Infantry

who rose to command the Iraqi Naval Academy. He is married with two children.

The 70th ICDC Brigade will assist with security operations in the Al Basra, Maysan, Dhi Qar and Al Muthanna provinces.

Primarily operating in rural areas, they will support the Iraqi police with operations such as vehicle check points and patrolling.

Brig. Dhia inspected a pass-out parade of officers in Basrah, and then held a short press conference.

He said he was looking forward to watching the ICDC grow as more and more soldiers were trained and equipped.

"We are at the beginning of our journey," he said. "The essentials that we need for our task are there, and we can only build on that."

Also present was Brigadier Nick Carter, the commander of the British 20th Armored Brigade, and Lieutenant Colonel Jonny Gray, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion the Argyll and Sutherland



Photo by Cpl. Gary Wort, RAF

Newly appointed Brigadier Dhia Kadom Jawad Al-Kadony takes over command of around 5,000 Iraqi troops.

Highlanders. His Battalion is responsible for training and developing the ICDC in southern Iraq.

Coalition Forces are continuing to work alongside the ICDC and other Iraqi security forces in joint operations and training programs.



Photo by Cpl. Gary Wort, RAF

Brigadier Dhia inspects the ICDC officers, followed by Brigadier Nick Carter of 20th Armored Brigade and Lieutenant Colonel Jonny Gray, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

USAID and CPA Reach Out and Complete Telephone Switches and International Satellite Gateway

Story contibuted by USAID

BAGHDAD — The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) today announced the integration of 13 new telephone switches and an International Satellite Gateway with the 14 existing switches of the Iraqi Telephone and Postal Company (ITPC) in Baghdad. The new switches and international gateway were installed by USAID partner Bechtel.

Before the conflict, 1.1 million Iraqis, half of which were in Baghdad, subscribed to the ITPC for landline telephone service. A large percentage of the capital city's switching centers were damaged during the conflict and service disrupted. In Baghdad, 240,000 out of 540,000 telephone lines were out of service at 12 separate exchange sites.

As part of the CPA's overall Reconstruction Program, USAID

and its implementing partner, Bechtel, restored the sites, which allow the ITPC to bring all telephone lines back into operation. Containerized, modern telephone switches were installed and are connected to and being monitored and controlled from the new Network Operations Center at Al Mamoun, the largest site in the country. The ITPC staff is connecting network wiring and programming subscriber numbers to allow final activation of the lines. Over 100,000 individual subscriber lines have now been connected. All fully operational telephones nationwide can access the switch at Al Mamoun and the International Satellite Gateway. Once connected to the gateway, out-bound international calls can be made using a prepaid phone card. Active subscribers are now receiving inbound international calls.

USAID and Bechtel collaborated closely with the ITPC on this project. ITPC crews performed much of the

work including clearing the rubble, leveling the sites, digging new cable ducts, locating intact cable and splicing cables and wiring of the main distribution frames of the switches.

In addition to the exchange switches, USAID partner Bechtel is restoring portions of the main 2,000 kilometer north-south fiber optic backbone, connecting Dahuk in the far north to Umm Qasr in the extreme south. Connectivity between all cities north and south of Baghdad will deliver the voice and data communications Iraq needs for its immediate requirements and for future economic development.

In support of the Coalition Provisional Authority's objectives to restore essential services, USAID is allocating \$50 million for improving Iraq's telecommunications infrastructure. For more information on CPA's and USAID's reconstruction efforts in Iraq including photos, please visit www.cpa-iraq.org and www.usaid.gov/iraq/.

Talil Air Base Religious Worship Services

Worship is at 332nd Expeditionary Wing Chapel, unless otherwise noted.

Catholic Daily Mass: Tuesday through Friday, 6 p.m.

Virgil Mass: Saturday, 6 p.m.

Confessions: 5-5:30 p.m. in the Blessed Sacrament Room

Sunday Mass: 8 a.m.

POC: Chaplain Martin King at 459-0038

Protestant Traditional:

Sunday, 9:30 a.m.

Liturgical Communion:

Sunday, 10:30

Gospel Service: Sunday, 11:45 a.m.

Contemporary Choir practice: Sunday, 6 p.m.

Contemporary Worship: Sunday, 7 p.m.

POC: Chaplain Michael Warner at 459-0038

Latter-Day Saints Lay-Led Service:

Friday, 8 p.m.

Jewish Lay-Led Service: Friday, 8p.m.

POC: Chapel staff, 459-0038

Muslim (LSA Adder Chapel) Prayer:

12:30 p.m. and sunset daily

Bible Studies

Women's: Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. (chapel)

Men's: Tuesday, 7:30 p.m. (chapel annex)

Catholic (RCIA) Thurs, 6:30 p.m. (chapel annex)

Catholic Sunday: 6:30 p.m. (chapel annex) Men and Women

Thursday 7:30 p.m. (chapel annex)

LDS Study Thursday, 7:30 p.m. (chapel annex)

1st AD PSYOP Team Connects With Local Communities

**Story and photo by
Spc. Chad D. Wilkerson**
372nd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD —U.S. Army Psychological Operations teams are hitting Baghdad's streets with information to combat fear and misinformation being spread by the enemies.

Soldiers from the 315th Psychological Operations Unit from San Jose, Calif., part of Task Force 1st Armored Division, are pushing out into the communities and meeting with residents to ensure that the Iraq people hear and see the truth about what is happening in their country.

"Today, we went out and distributed copies of 'Baghdad Now' and the new 'Next Generation' posters," said Maj. John A. Grench, PSYOP opera-

tions officer for 1st Armored Division.

"It is important to inform the Iraqi people of the coalition forces' intentions and what we are doing by distributing informative products and through face-to-face communication."

"Baghdad Now," published every two weeks, tells residents about events and provides news about their neighborhoods. It is written in Arabic and English by Iraqi journalists and also contains news from the neighborhoods' military leaders.

The paper highlights the accomplishments of coalition and Iraqi community members in the rebuilding of the country, said Grench.

PSYOP's newest communication tools are the "Next Generation" posters. The "Next Generation" posters show representatives from the new Iraqi security forces: Iraqi Police Services, Force Protection

Services, Iraqi Civil Defense Corps and the New Iraqi Army.

Grench and his team hang the posters in local shops and businesses hoping Iraqis see that they are as much a part of the security of their nation as the Coalition, he said.

PSYOP use the posters and newspapers as tools to break the language barriers and quickly spread vital, accurate information to the Iraqi public, but, Grench said, nothing is quite like personal contact.

"Building bridges' is one of the primary goals for PSYOP," he said. "By talking to people and gaining perspective in a local area, it allows us to build a picture of the overall perception in a region. After identifying the problems, concerns and misinformation, we can come back and begin to address it."

Even with much misinformation being spread throughout Iraqi communities, Grench said that the overall attitude of Iraqis toward coalition personnel is very positive.

"Most feel good about U.S. forces," he said. "There is only a small percentage out there who are somewhat put off by Soldiers, but that is mainly because they do not know how to react to us. Those people have had very little contact with U.S. forces and quickly latch onto anything they hear because they do not know the truth. That is why we are here — to make sure they hear the whole truth."

With a circulation of more than 750,000 copies, "Baghdad Now" is reaching more Iraqis now than ever before. Distribution of the papers keeps PSYOP forces busy in the streets of the city but also allows them time to make contact with the people and learn about them.

"I was happy to participate in the liberation of Iraq and now I am happy to participate in its rebuilding," Grench said. "If there is one thing I have learned, it is these people are no different from our own people. We have the same problems, troubles, worries and fears. Over time, with our facilitation, they will learn to help themselves and take advantages of the opportunities they have never had before."



Maj. John A. Grench, PSYOP operations officer with the 315th Psychological Operations Unit, an Army Reserve unit from San Jose, Calif., affixes a "Next Generation" poster on the wall of a local business. The poster shows members of the new Iraqi security forces.

Iraq in Briefs

Stryker Brigade Soldiers collect arms and destroy IEDs in northern Iraq

MOSUL (Feb. 25, 2004) - Soldiers from 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) under the operational control of Task Force Olympia recovered weapons and other explosives during ongoing collection operations in northern Iraq Monday and Tuesday.

Members of the Coalition for Iraqi Unity, a concerned group of citizens in northwestern Iraq, came to the 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment area of operations Monday and Tuesday and turned in 168 rocket-propelled grenade warheads, two RPG launchers, 90 RPG boosters, 281 hand grenades, 663 60mm mortar rounds, six 14.5mm anti-aircraft guns, 200 14.5mm rounds, one 105mm artillery round, 30 122mm artillery rounds, 129 90mm rounds, four 120mm mortar rounds, one RPG night sight and one mortar sight.

Cavalry captures two suspected illegal weapons dealers

BAGHDAD - Task Force 1st Armored Division Soldiers from the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps conducted a raid in eastern Baghdad Feb. 22 on a suspected insurgent training area.

During the operation, Soldiers seized a bolt-action rifle, two SKS rifles, nine AK 47 assault rifles, three hand grenades, a rocket-propelled grenade launcher, 30 RPG rounds, three RPG sights, a shotgun, three mortar fuses, a 130 mm artillery round, 4,000 7.62 mm ammunition and improvised explosive device electronics package.

Council member's tip leads to arrest, weapons-cache seizure

BAGHDAD - A tip from a district advisory council member helped Task Force 1st Armored Division soldiers arrest a suspected insurgent and uncover several illegal weapons Feb. 23.

Acting upon the information, soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's Task Force 2-6 arrested a man suspected of planning a mortar attack on U.S. forces.

During the raid on the suspect's home in the Karradah district, soldiers found and seized four rifles, a mortar tube with base plate and aiming device and assorted small-arms ammunition.

Rumsfeld meets with Task Force 1st Armored Division soldiers, views ICDC

BAGHDAD — The Office of the Secretary of Defense sent word to the military leadership in Iraq earlier this month that Donald Rumsfeld, the U.S. secretary of defense, was coming to Iraq, and he specifically wanted to see the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, which is assigned to Task Force 1st Armored Division.

Rumsfeld, in addition to meeting with the Regiment's troopers, was interested in seeing the Iraqi Civil Defense Academy at Camp Muleskinner, the communiqué continued.

The 2nd ACR's ICDC Academy has trained more than 1,500 new guardsmen who have been integrated into operations in support of their country and communities.

The secretary of defense wanted to see how well Iraqis were responding to the call from the world to take charge of their country.

The secretary heard an overview briefing on the state of security in Baghdad. The information included discussions on the Iraqi contingency and reports on the ICDC and the Iraqi Police Service.

Rumsfeld said he was pleased with the course of action in training the Iraqi volunteers and the numbers of ICDC soldiers and police officers that are projected to be available to serve their country in the near future.

The next stop was the ICDC Academy.

The secretary spent about 30 minutes touring the facility, talking with the cadre and lauding the ICDC trainees for their service.

"I am so proud of you all for what you are doing for your country," he said. "The future of Iraq is in your hands."

He also complimented the cadre for their tireless work, presenting many of them with his official commemorative coin. He spent about 10 minutes posing for pictures and talking with the large group of soldiers that had gathered outside to see him.

Right: Paratroopers from 82d Airborne Division's 3rd BCT, practice exiting the door during a Basic Airborne Refresher (BAR) course taught by the division's jumpmasters at Rifle Base, in Al Asad, Iraq, to train for the airborne assault operation to demonstrate joint U.S. capabilities for rapid deployment/redeployment anywhere in the world to support the war on terror during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Feb. 24, 2004. Photo by Staff Sgt. Charles B. Johnson.



Paratroopers from 82d Airborne Division's 3rd BCT, practice exiting the door during a Basic Airborne Refresher course taught by the division's jumpmasters at Rifle Base, in Al Asad, Iraq. Photo by Staff Sgt. Charles B. Johnson .

82nd ABN Shows Abilities in Iraq

America's Guard of Honor practices its specialty at Rifles Base in Al Asad. The demonstration of force was to ensure that their skills were kept sharp. The 82nd trains with the Air Force in order to keep the quality of their teamwork intact.

"We can be wheels up in 18 hours and anywhere in the world. It's amazing to see the flexibility of the American paratrooper. We have to have the Air Force to this, they put the air in airborne" said Maj. Gen. Charles H. Swannack, jr.

The 82nd Airborne Division is the largest parachute force in the free world. They are able to deploy anywhere, anytime and to fight when they get there.

The 82nd was formed on Aug. 25th, 1917 at Camp Gordon, Ga. Since members of the unit came from all the states the unit was given the nickname "All American". This is where the famous "AA" shoulder patch derived from.

In 1918 the 82nd was deployed to France and fought in three major campaigns in World War I.

The division was called upon again in April of 1943 to go to North Africa to be part of a campaign aimed to puncture the soft underbelly of the Third Reich during WW II

The first two combat operations the division was in were Sicily and Salerno, Italy on July 9th and Sep. 13th, 1943.

In Jan. 1944 the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment was given the nickname "Devils in Baggy Pants." The nickname was taken from the diary of a German officer.

On June 5th-6th of 1944 the 82nd paratroopers boarded transport planes and gliders to begin the largest airborne assault in history. They were the

first Soldiers to fight in the assault on Normandy. They spent 33 days in combat before being pulled to England. When they returned the battle report read "... 33 days of action without replacements. Every mission accomplished. No ground gained was ever relinquished."

The next major deployment would come in Jan. 1968 when the 82nd was sent to the Republic of Vietnam in response to the Tet Offensive. The 3rd brigade performed combat duties in the Hue-Phu Bai area before being moved down to Saigon. When in Saigon the brigade fought in battles in the Mekong Delta, the Iron Triangle and along the Cambodian border. They returned home on Dec. 12th, 1969.

The next deployment was to Grenada in support of operation Urgent Fury in Oct. 1983. The operation ended in early Nov.

In Dec. 1989 the 82nd conducted the first combat jump since WWII when they conducted a night jump into Panama. After the jump air assault missions were conducted in Panama city. They returned Jan. 12th, 1990.

Feb. 23rd, 1991 the 82nd participated in the 100 hour ground war into Iraq to liberate Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm.

In 1999 the 82nd was among the first troops to enter Kosovo.

In June 2002 the 82nd answered Sept. 11th when they were deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. They still help maintain operations there.

Feb. 2003 the division sent troops to Iraq/Kuwait in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and still maintain their mission.



Above: A Basic Airborne Refresher (BAR) course taught by the division's jumpmasters at Rifle Base, in Al Asad, Iraq, to train for the airborne assault operation to demonstrate joint U.S. capabilities for rapid deployment/redeployment anywhere in the world to support the war on terror during Operation Iraqi Freedom, Feb. 24, 2004. Photo by Staff Sgt. Charles B. Johnson.



Above: Paratroopers from 82d Airborne Division's 3rd BCT, wait for the green light to exit the C-130 aircraft as they approach the drop zone at Rifle Base in Al Asad, Iraq, Feb. 24, 2004, for the airborne assault operation. Paratroopers are demonstrating joint U.S. capabilities for rapid deployment/redeployment anywhere in the world to support the war on terror during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Photo by Staff Sgt. Charles B. Johnson.



Above: Paratroopers from 82d Airborne Division's 1st BCT, assist one another tightening their buddy's chute during a Basic Airborne Refresher course taught by the division's jumpmasters at Rifle Base, in Al Asad, to train for the airborne assault operation to demonstrate joint U.S. capabilities for rapid deployment/redeployment anywhere in the world to support Operation Iraqi Freedom, Feb. 24, 2004. Photo by Staff Sgt. Charles B. Johnson



Above: Paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne's 3rd Brigade Combat Team descend onto Drop Zone York during Operation All-I American Lightning at Rifle Base, Al Asad, during the airborne assault operation to demonstrate joint U.S. capabilities for rapid deployment/redeployment anywhere in the world to support Operation Iraqi Freedom, Feb. 24, 2004. Photo by Spc. Jeffrey Hillery.

Iron Tax Center Makes Filing Less Taxing

Story by
Spc. Shauna McRoberts
1st Armored Division
Public Affairs Office

BAGHDAD – Tax season is upon us again and for the first time in 1st Armored Division history, a tax center has been opened in a combat zone.

Operating since Feb. 4, the Iron Tax Center is located on the second floor of the Hotel California building at Baghdad International Airport. Tax advisors are also located with 1st, 2nd and 3rd Brigade Combat Teams, the Division Artillery Combat Team and the Division Support Command.

“I encourage all Soldiers to take advantage of the Tax Center,” said Brig. Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, 1AD commanding general. “It is another example of our ongoing efforts to assist Soldiers in maintaining a normal life, although we’re in combat.”

Although the Iron Tax Center is primarily for 1AD and units supporting 1AD, all Soldiers are welcome to utilize its services.

According to Capt. Ty McDonald, officer in charge of the Tax Center and a Staff Judge Advocate with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1AD, doing your taxes with the center can be quite simple because everything is done electronically.

For most single Soldiers, only a myPay pin number or their W-2 form and bank account information is needed to file. Married Soldiers need these items in

addition to a power of attorney from their spouse, which can be obtained with a little coordination. Spouses should visit their legal center at their home station to have a power of attorney faxed or emailed to the Tax Center here.

Sometimes additional paperwork is needed, though, McDonald said. This paperwork may include the social security numbers of any children, 1099 forms, if a Soldier has earned more than \$200 in interest on a savings account, or any student loan paperwork.

Currently, the Iron Tax Center is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., although later appointments can be made.

“We are happy to make time accommodations, based on Soldiers’ missions,” said McDonald. “But I encourage Soldiers to file their taxes now.”

According to McDonald, 15 states do not have an extension period—past the tax due date of April 15—for deployed Soldiers.

“I think it’s important for Soldiers to take care of their taxes here,” said Spc. Seliman Corder, a food service specialist with 55th Personnel Service Battalion. “It’s one less thing you have to worry about while you continue to fulfill your mission.”

Once taxes have been filed, federal returns usually take about 10 days and state returns take approximately two weeks.

McDonald said the average total return is \$1,215, but he has seen a Soldier receive more than \$6,000.



As a part of 'Operation Rock the Vote' Spec. Jason K. Secrist, a team leader with the 346th Psychological Operations Company talks to a member of the local community about the upcoming Iraqi government elections and other issues that concern the public.

Rock the Vote for Sovereignty

Story and photo by
Pfc. J. H. French
82nd Airborne Division
Public Affairs Office

AR RAMADI – Most of the people living in Iraq today have never lived in or experienced a democratic society. The Coalition Forces are working overtime to remedy this and help the local populace understand what democracy is and what the Coalition’s role in the new Iraq will be.

The 346th Airborne Tactical Psychological Operations Company, from Columbus, Ohio, is working with members of the 1st Infantry Division’s 1st Brigade Combat Team, as a part of Operation Rock the Vote in order to spread the Coalition’s message in the Ar Ramadi area.

“After the capture of many of the high-level insurgency leaders, we want to fill the leadership void with a positive influence,” said Spc. Jason K. Secrist, a team leader with the 346th. “We want to give the populace a better alternative than fighting.”

Hopefully, this will help turn the negative attitudes in the area to positive ones and help make the transition from a Coalition occupation to one that is more of a peacekeeping or stabilizing operation, said Secrist.

In addition to winning the hearts and minds of the people, one of the other goals of the

operation is to teach Iraqis the process and ideals of democracy.

“We want to give the local people a better understanding of democracy and explain that everyone will have an equal voice in the new government,” Secrist explained.

Ideally this will give the population a positive view of the Coalition’s efforts to return the control of Iraq to its citizens. It will also help to correct false information and assumptions by providing them with information and helping them become more involved in the new Iraq, he continued.

Secrist and the rest of the Psychological Operation unit’s job, is to become involved in meetings between commanders and key leaders in the community, such as sheiks, imams or religious leaders, teachers and council members.

“I monitor conversations and make sure the correct message is put out,” said Secrist. “I also answer questions and supply information to leaders of the community in order to learn about and understand what is going on.”

“Every sheik I have talked to so far has been very receptive and willing to work with us,” he continued. “They seem to be involved with the government already which means I don’t have to go and preach something entirely new. They are already involved and have a voice in the

government.”

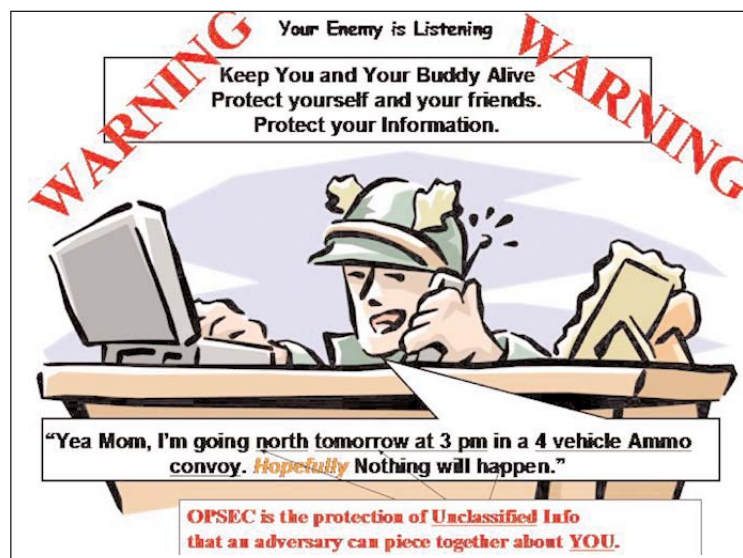
After establishing relationships with key community leaders, the 346th and the units they support will conduct a door-to-door campaign to saturate the city and surrounding area with information concerning the government, a timeline to sovereignty, a tips line to report suspicious activity, how to react to and understand traffic control points and curfew information.

One of the reasons for establishing a relationship with the leaders of the community is so they can answer the questions local people have about the program directly.

“After this, we’ll go back and see how things are going and see if people are asking their leaders questions and getting involved in the new government,” he continued.

“It also helps that [C Company, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment], the company I support is already involved in civil affairs projects,” explained Secrist. “It makes my job easier because I can say ‘hey, look, this is what we have done in your community. This is what [the Coalition] is doing for you.’”

From helping spread a positive influence in the Ar Ramadi area to teaching the local people about democracy, Operation Rock the Vote is one of the first steps in returning the country’s sovereignty to the people of Iraq.



New Naval Base in Umm Qasr Makes Waves

Two Iraqi females from the local village bring scissors to Adm. David Nash, Director of the Program Management Office, to cut the ribbon during the ceremony, at the Naval Base in Umm Qsar. Iraqi government officials and coordinators attended the ceremony, which marked the opening of the new headquarters building.

After the ceremony, Nash toured the new building and was interviewed by the media.



Photo by Spc. Rachel M. Ahner, 982nd Sig. Co.

CEREMONY

Continued from Page 1

"This is a historic and great day for the Iraqi people," said Lt. Col. Marwan Mohammed, the 1st Armored Division Artillery Combat Team's 304th ICDC Battalion commander, after being pinned by Col. Jon Brockman, DCT commander.

The 18-year air defense artillery officer for the former Iraqi army said this is only the first of many steps toward a free and new Iraq.

"It is like night to day, from dark to light," Mohammed said describing the changes in his country after the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime." Previously, people would put on the rank and do nothing for the rank."

Mohammed keeps the old rank he once wore in his pocket as a reminder of the regime that used power to dictate how people lived and destroyed their lives.

"People would use their rank to harm people – it's just how it was," he said. "My first goal with my new rank is to serve my country honorably. I want to help and serve the Iraqi people. They deserve nothing less."

He said wearing the ICDC uniform brings risk to his life.

"It's our responsibility toward our country and nation. I would like to thank the coalition forces for the training and opportunity to live with this risk," he said.

Dempsey reminded the ICDC leaders that freedom isn't free, "But we've also learned that freedom can not be

given away," he said. "It must be earned and these men and the men they lead in the ICDC and the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Police will have earned it."

The Iraqis are at a turning point in their rich and long history, Dempsey said.

"For the first time in many years, the citizens of Iraq will decide for themselves what type of future they want," he said.

"These men will ensure this decision can be made in security and in peace," he said. "When the history of this new, free Iraq is written, the name of these men will be listed among its heroes."

Following the formal portion of the commissioning ceremony, the stage was filled as Dempsey and other American and Iraqi officers holding hands as a sign of commitment and solidarity.

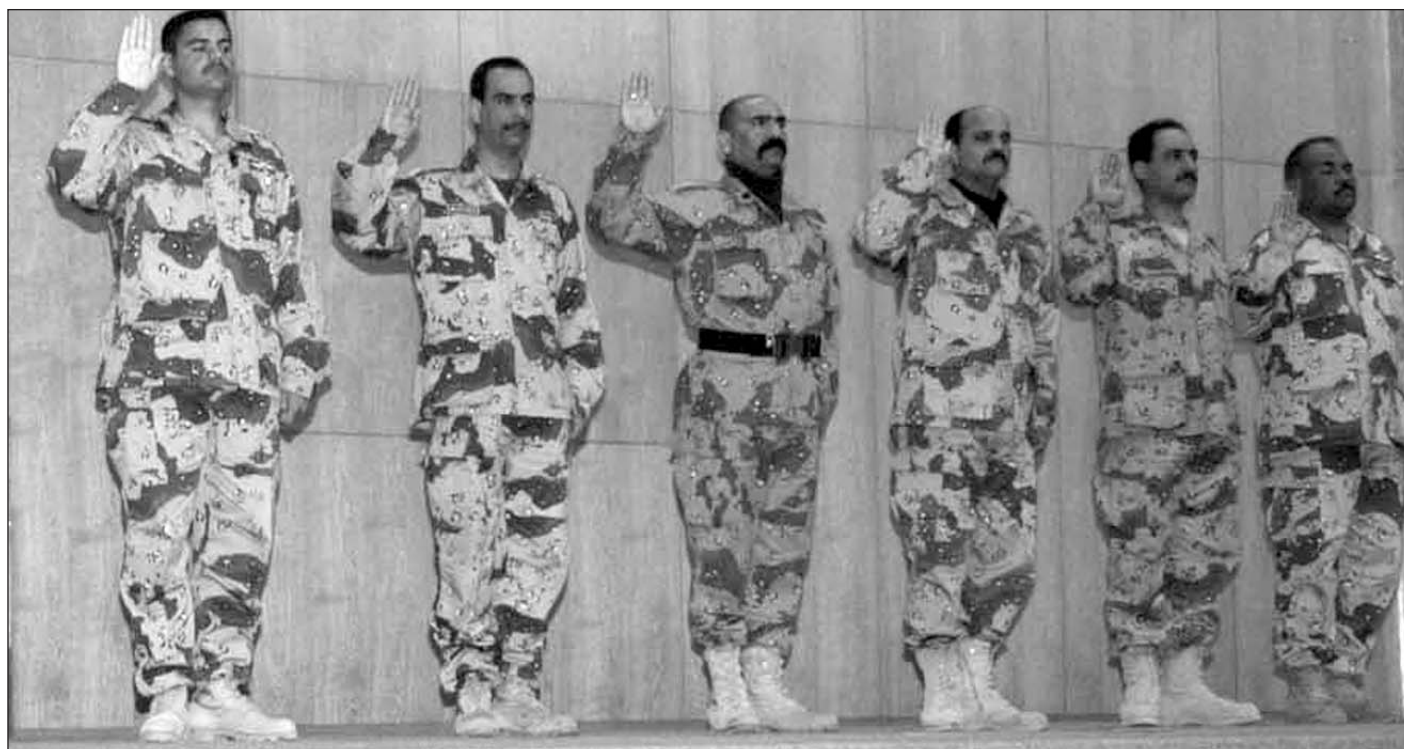


Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Bell, 372nd MPAD

Iraqi Civil Defense Corps officers pledge an oath to the Defense Corps (ICDC) during the inaugural ICDC commissioning ceremony held at Martyr's Monument.

Worship and Prayer Schedule for CPA - Chapel

Daily Islamic Prayer Tuesday

1630 — Catholic Mass
(Convention Center)

1930 — Ladies Bible Study

Wednesday

0630 — Morning Bible Study
(Chaplain's office)

1900 — Bible Study
(Ministries Conference Room)

Thursday

1630 — Catholic Mass

Friday

1800 — Jewish (Shabbat)
Services

2000 — Contemporary
Christian Gathering

Saturday

1230 — Buddhist Meditation
1630 — Catholic Mass
(Convention Center)

Sunday

0730 — Episcopal /
Lutheran/Anglican
0930 — Choir Rehearsal
1030 — General Christian
1400 — Latter - Day Saints
1630 — Roman Catholic Mass
1800 — Contemporary
Protestant

Military Dogs Provide Extra Security for Base, Mission

**Story and photo by
Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Williams**
506th Air Expeditionary
Group Public Affairs

Most people think of secret weapons used in Operation Iraqi Freedom in terms of bullets, guns, aircraft and bombs.

Sometimes the thought of specially-trained elite warriors like the Navy SEAL teams, Marine Force Recon units, Air Force Special Operations or Army Rangers come to mind.

For the men and women of the 506th Air Expeditionary Group, a not-so-secret but little known weapon comes in the form of a nose. A dog's nose.

The military working dogs and handlers attached to the 506th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron make this the largest kennel in the Iraqi Freedom theatre of operations.

They perform various tasks from searches to detection in and around the base.

"The working dog is an invaluable asset because there is no person or machine that does what a working dog does," said Staff Sgt. Adam McLeod, handler.

That statement was echoed by Staff Sgt. Christopher Collins, kennel master.

"Every machine here either overheats or breaks. Our dogs work in mud, sometimes up to their necks," Sergeant Collins said.

"Dogs have more sensitivity than us. They can hear and see better. Sometimes merely seeing a dog at the gate can be a deterrent against people bringing something in that they aren't supposed to," he added.

Sergeant McLeod said the dogs aren't restricted to on-base activities, but serve a multitude of tasks off base.

"Sometimes we'll do joint missions with the Army," Sergeant McLeod said. "Our primary job is to find explo-

sives and improvised explosive devices. We also look for weapons, mortar rounds and all the other stuff they've been shooting at us."

Sergeant Collins, who has 17-years of experience working with dogs, is amazed at some of the things dogs have found on this rotation.

"Occasionally we've found things from remote-control parts, various weapons and even missiles," he said.

The road to Iraq as a dog handler is not an easy one. Dog handlers are volunteers who go through a lot of intense training – first in regular security forces work, and then with the dogs at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

Some of that field training occurs on-site, like at Kirkuk Air Base.

"We do validation training with explosives here in country to make sure the dogs recognize explosives with a different chemical composition," said Staff Sgt. Joshua Wickster, trainer.

With training comes care.

Sergeant Wickster said the dogs are fed Science Diet Active food twice each day, with each dog's portion recommended by the veterinarian.

Medical care on base is often provided by the 506th Expeditionary Medical Squadron, as Master Sgt. Johnnie Gandolfo, a medical technician, also serves as a veterinary technician, a job she holds in the civilian world while not deployed with the Washington Air National Guard.

Master Sgt. Deb Alaniz, x-ray technician, has experience working with the dogs.

Sergeant Wickster credits both EMEDS members for their help in keeping the working dog program in good condition.

When it comes to the reasons for getting into the working dog program, each handler is different.

"I got into dogs because



Exa, a military working dog for the 506th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron at Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, checks a vehicle during a routine inspection recently.

they will be completely honest with you," said Sergeant Collins, who handled 10 dogs in his career. "There is no deception, like in humans. If you pay attention, they'll be completely honest to the point that if the dog doesn't like you, he'll let you know."

Staff Sgt. Andrew Bedell and his German Shepard Exa, who has the distinctive habit of crossing her front legs, arrived here in mid-January from McConnell Air Force Base, Kansas.

"I like being by myself, and with the dog, I get the companionship that I need," the sergeant said. "She is the one who does the work, actually. I just handle the leash and give her the rewards."

The squadron uses a variety of dogs in its working dog program, with the most commonly used breed being the German Shepherd.

Staff Sgt. Joshua Morrison is the handler for Liz, the seven-year old Labrador who

often acts like a movie star when all eyes are on her.

"It's a little different," Sergeant Morrison said. "People tease me a lot about having a lab, but she proved herself on a combat raid recently. She found a modified assault weapon and two 30-round magazines that were hidden in a mattress in a house we raided."

"With Liz, people can get more hands-on, and the public can learn more from her compared to some of the other dogs," he added.

Despite the friendliness of some dogs, like Liz, Sergeant Collins points out the fact they are still working dogs and are not personal pets.

"People have to remember that while the dogs are sociable, they still have the job of protecting the handler. You take the risk of getting bitten," Sergeant Collins said.

Sergeant McLeod said, "You still have to ask before you pet, but Liz is our thera-

py dog. She just lifts our spirits."

He described his dog, Salan. "He's a happy go-lucky dog. He's not aggressive unless I want him to be."

The dogs have their own personalities that oftentimes the handlers compare them to humans.

Sergeant Collins, the kennel master, said, "Dogs are like us. They try to get out of things. If you let them get away with something once, they'll try that and something else the next time. They are like eight-year old kids."

"Younger dogs don't fully understand things they should be doing," he added. "Veteran dogs test their handler to try to get away with certain things."

He compared Brit, Senior Airman Thomas McElroy's two-year old German Shepherd, with Fonda, a six-year old German Shepherd handled by Staff Sgt. Thomas Hentzl.

"Brit is still learning the ropes," he said. "He's a good dog with a lot of potential, but he's at the stage where he's trying to accomplish tasks he's still learning. Fonda has been around, so we expect more."

Sergeant Bedell, who has worked with six dogs in his three-year handling career, said the hardest part of being a handler is having to detach when changing dogs. Other handlers agreed.

"As soon as you get to click as a team, you may be together one to two years and then comes the inevitable – orders," said Sergeant Collins.

"It's always hard to leave a dog. You understand each other, even if the dog is hard to deal with, because you and the dog are a team. The separating gets hard" said Collins.

Despite the occasional parting of ways, Sergeant Haupt believes the biggest benefit to all handlers is, "the unconditional love they will always show for you."



Spc. Jennifer Harris, Coalition Press Information Center, Hands and Iraqi journalist a new media identification card. All credtialed media will now have the same badge.

CJTF-7 Updates Media in Iraq

**Story and photo by
Spc. Jeffrey Hillery**
204th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD - In the past the media in Iraq had several different forms of identification to prove that they were credentialed media. Now Command Joint Task Force Seven is enacting a new media identification badge. All media that are credentialed will have the same badge.

The purpose of having the same form of identification for all the credentialed media is two fold. One is that by having one type of ID the safety and security of media and people participating in media events can be ensured. It also helps them get access into Coalition Press Authority and CJTF-7 events and makes them readily identifiable as media.

In order for a member of the media to become credentialed they must either be on a previous list of credentialed media or be currently employed by a media organization. They must show a government form of ID and an ID issued by their organization.

The ID's also help coalition forces when dealing with media. "The phone

number on the back gives them the ability to call and confirm that the person is a certified media representative. If they have any questions it gives them a place they can go to for answers", said Sgt. Jarrod Cooper, Coalition Press Information Center. "The new ID is a credentialed issued but it does not guarantee entrance to anywhere. It just identifies them as members of the media", said Cooper.

The ID cards are good for 90 days. The expiration date is printed on the front of the card with a picture of the person to which the ID was issued. The back of the card contains verifiable info that can be used to ensure that the person using the card is the one which it was issued to. If the card is expired call the number on the back for further instruction.

Media credentialing is done in the International Press Center located inside the Baghdad Forum. The hours are Monday thru Thursday from 9 a.m. until 12 p.m. Those interested in becoming credentialed need to bring a government form of ID and an ID or previous press credential issued by their organization.

Questions can be forwarded to jcoop-er@baghdadforum.com or call the CPIC press desk at 914-360-5071.

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From Central America to Central Iraq: High School Buddies Reunite After Nearly 20 Years

**Story and photo by
Sgt. Brianne Pippin**
III Corps Public Affairs Office

When Muriel Ramirez-Salaz and Diana Staneszewski first met in Panama as seventh graders, they weren't yet old enough to even think about driving and their world didn't extend much past the Panama Canal Zone and their tight-knit group of friends.

Today, Air Force Maj. Muriel Ramirez-Salaz, III Corps, Fort Hood, Texas, and Marine Corps Maj. Diana Staneszewski, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina, have unexpectedly crossed paths in Iraq after losing touch nearly 20 years ago.

"It's so odd to run into one another here of all places," both the majors explained. "But it's exciting since we haven't seen one another in such a long time."

Running into an old school friend was the last thing that Staneszewski was expecting when she was eating lunch at the dining facility on north Camp Victory,

but that's how the two met again for the first time since the summer after high school graduation.

"I was just eating dinner in the dining facility and saw (Ramirez-Salaz) walk by," explained Staneszewski about how the two friends were reunited. "When I got up to look for her, she was no where to be found because it was just a mad rush in there. But I knew in my gut that it was her."

After a short search yielded her long-lost friend's work phone number, Staneszewski called her up and the pair spent the rest of the evening reminiscing.

"Just hearing from her brought back a lot of great memories," said Ramirez-Salaz. "Just before I left (for Iraq) I went to Austin to visit Dee (another friend from the Panama school system). We were talking about Diana, and how weird it would be to run into her here, but I thought, what are the chances of that happening?"

In the two weeks since the friends were reunited, they see each other just about everyday, trying to catch up on the 18 years they haven't spoken.



Maj. Muriel Ramirez-Salaz, III Corps, Fort Hood, Texas, and Marine Corps Maj. Diana Staneszewski, Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina, have unexpectedly crossed paths in Iraq after losing touch nearly 20 years ago.

Need Cash?

The 230th Finance Battalion is on Steadfast and Loyal Street next to the bombed out palace in Tikrit.

Hours of operation:

Mondays--Saturday

9 a.m. --5 p.m.

Sundays

10 a.m.--2 p.m.

Check cashing limit is \$200 per week and the casual pay limit is \$350 per month

A DA Form 2132 (Pay Inquiry) signed by an E-7 or above is needed for casual pay.

A Walk Over a Bridge Changes Major Ahmed's Life Forever



Lt. Col. Ahmed Lutfie Ahmed, a former major in the old Iraqi army, speaks with Marine Gunnery Sgt. Yolanda M. Mayo, an AFN correspondent. Ahmed explains to Mayo how he began working with the Coalition forces and what his duties are now. He recollects the day when he crossed a bridge and his life changed forever.

Story by Sgt. Brian D. Stockhoff
204th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD — Lt. Col. Ahmed Lutfie Ahmed has experienced both ends of the spectrum. He was a major in the Iraqi army, under the former regime, but has since been promoted to lieutenant colonel under a newly formed army. He was part of air defense in the old Iraqi army.

One experience in particular led him to be where he is today. It started in March of last year, during the beginning of the war. A self-proclaimed military man, he says what happened to him during the 20-day stretch was like magic.

His boss told him to take his soldiers to Al Hillah and stay there. He said that on April 8, 2003, when the war ended, his Brigadier told him that he and his soldiers could go home. He passed that order on to his soldiers and officers, telling them that they could return to their homes. He said he didn't know whether to change into civilian clothes or to stay in his military uniform. "I am not a coward and I am on orders," he said and decided to keep his military clothes on. He grabbed his rifle and his pistol and headed home to Baghdad.

When he arrived in Baghdad on April 9, 2003, some people told him that Saddam Hussein was in the center of Baghdad and was telling people to fight against the Americans. This information did not

coincide with the order he had received, it didn't make any sense to him he said.

He went to the Bridge of the Al Rashid, near new Baghdad; he saw a tank and what he thought were Marines. One of them stopped him and asked him where he was going? "I think to myself in this moment, in this second I remember my family, my wife and my children, and I think he is going to kill me. I looked to the sky and say to god, now I come to you. I look at him and tell him I am a major in the old army." The Marine asked him why he was in uniform and if he spoke English. Ahmed told him that he was a chemical engineer in the Baghdad University. The Marine then asked why he hadn't changed into civilian clothes. Ahmed said "because I am under orders, my brigade told me to go to town." "He looked at me, with his rifle, and I thought that he was going to kill me. I looked at him and he looked at my face for a minute and I don't forget this, I thought he was looking for me." The Marine then said sir, you can go. Ahmed said, when he told me this, I thought he was going to kill me.

Ahmed asked himself why he had been fighting these people for 13 years, he didn't kill me. As he walked across the bridge, he still thought he was going to get killed. When he got to the end of the bridge, he turned and he looked back at the Marine. The Marine snapped to attention and saluted the Iraqi major. He thought to himself that maybe he understands what I am thinking. "He speaks

English and I speak Arabic, but I think there is a language of the eyes between military men, in any army of the world."

At this moment, Ahmed was crying. When he neared his town he realized that the Marine had killed him with his words and not with his rifle. When the Marine said "sir, please you can go," it changed him. Ahmed said, "If I could see that man today, I would tell him that my wife thanks you, my children thank you and I love you. If you need my blood, I will give it to you." He gave me my future; he gave me the trust in the friendly forces and exactly with the American Army. "When I got home, something happened, this man broke something inside of me, I don't know what it was."

In July 2003, when someone told him that a new Iraqi Army was being formed, he went to the recruiting station in Baghdad. He handed in his paper work and told them he was a major in the old army. He said he was surprised when a member of the American staff said, "Welcome, you can go to this army."

He went to Baa'quba to Kirkush and stayed two months with Vinnell Company. He said "this is a very good company." After two months he is told that he is a candidate officer. He was willing to work to earn his rank of either major or lieutenant colonel. He would not accept lower than his previous rank. "I am going to do my duty," he said. After he finished the two months they gave him his rank as a major.

After he received his rank, he was re-assigned to work in the palace with the Coalition Military Assistant Training Team (CMATT). He first worked with the recruiting section, and stayed there for two months from October to December.

His boss told him that he was needed in the training area, more than he was needed in recruiting. He worked in the Iraqi civilian group defense. Then they moved

him to work as an Iraqi movement control officer because they depended on him. "I work with Col. Jeffrey Buchanan, he is my big brother and I love him," Ahmed said. "He saw my job and he told me I deserve lieutenant colonel, and he gave me another star."

Ahmed said that "I love to work with the Americans, because they have big patience and there is a language of the eyes and these people can understand anybody just by looking at them."

Ahmed's family was present during his promotion ceremony on Feb 1, 2003. His boss, Col. Buchanan asked him what he would like to do for the ceremony. Buchanan said that in America, if you would like your wife could pin-on your new rank. Ahmed said, "No, I would like you and Maj. Gen. Paul Eaton."

He continued this duty until Feb. 11, 2003. On this day he was to take 200 Iraqi non commissioned officers to Kirkush for two months. That morning though, there was an accident. While the 200 men were in line at the recruiting station, a car drove into the area and exploded. Forty men died because of the car bomb. Five days later on Feb 16, 2003, he went back to the recruiting station. Waiting there was 160 Iraqi ncos waiting to go. Ahmed said, "On this day I forget that accident because I think this was the day of victory." He felt this way because the terrorist act from only five days ago did not deter these men at all. They all came back, knowing the dangers that came with the job.

"At first there was some decrease of guys that went to the recruiting stations," said Ahmed. But now, there are five recruiting stations in Iraq. "There is some confidence now beginning," he said. "It started with the American forces, and now we should build up our army first before anything else." "If there is no army, there is nothing."

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Moonlighting Soldiers Teach College Courses

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Nate Orme
3rd Personnel Command

CAMP ARIFJAN, Kuwait — Some Soldiers have discovered they don't need to put college plans off until after their Operation Iraqi Freedom deployment. What's more, their teachers are also Soldiers, often credentialed "in the field" as college professors by major universities.

Soldiers with a master's degree can teach undergraduate courses after they have been accredited to teach, said Capt. Michael Malone, adjutant for the 368th Engineers Combat Battalion, a Reserve unit from Londonderry, N.H.

College has had to be put on hold for most Soldiers deployed for OIF. Although the Camp Doha education center offered courses, usually taught by civilian instructors, most Soldiers couldn't get there.

Malone, a software expert from San Jose, Calif., researched how to get classes running for Soldiers stationed at Camp Arifjan and found out about the teaching program.

"I called the Camp Doha education center and found out what it would take to teach. Basically, it took a master's degree and filling out a form, which was sent to a satellite branch of the University of Maryland in

Germany for accreditation," Malone explained.

When home in the Silicon Valley, Malone is the vice president of software integration for Star Technologies Inc.

Malone also needed to find a place to teach. Since he was in an engineering unit, it wasn't hard to find some Soldier craftsmen to put together some tables and benches. After a tent was procured, all that was left was to set up some classes and get Soldiers signed up.

"We worked with the University of Maryland to set up registration in the community center," Malone said. "The first semester it was 99% our battalion. We had about 100 students. This semester we posted flyers and got about 200."

"We're putting on ten classes this quarter. We've also recruited other teachers," Malone stated. "Capt. DeFeo is teaching a course on ethics and criminal justice this semester."

Capt. James DeFeo, an intelligence officer with the 368th Engineers, is a police officer in his civilian career and has a master's degree in criminal justice.

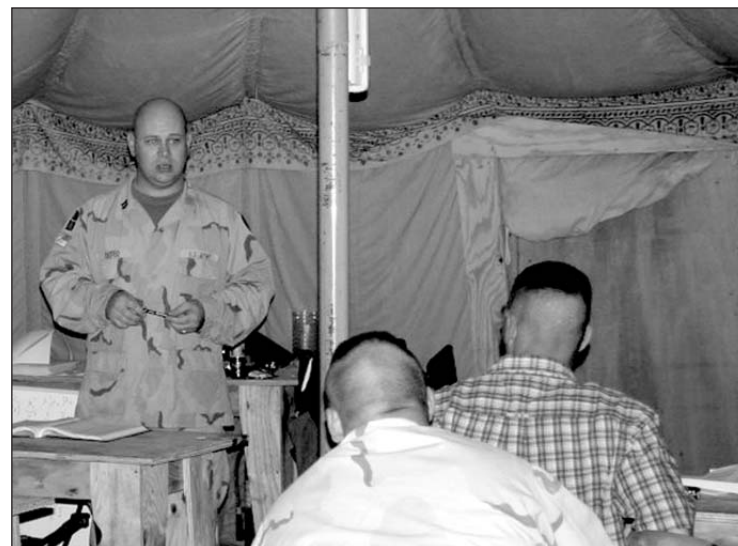
Most classes are worth three credit hours. They last eight weeks, and classes are held twice a week for three hours each. Classes are also being set up at other bases, such as Camp Udairi recently, near the border with

Iraq.

In addition to filling the night hours and broadening the mind, teachers are also paid by universities for their work, as long as it is not in conflict with duty hours.

"I was interested in taking care of Soldiers, that is why I do it," Malone said. "We were mobilized in October (2002), but didn't go. Then again in January (2003), but we didn't get here until April. We thought we'd be going home last August. Each time, people had to cancel classes they were enrolled in."

Malone, who is teaching courses in computers that can be used to prepare for commercial certifications, is looking into

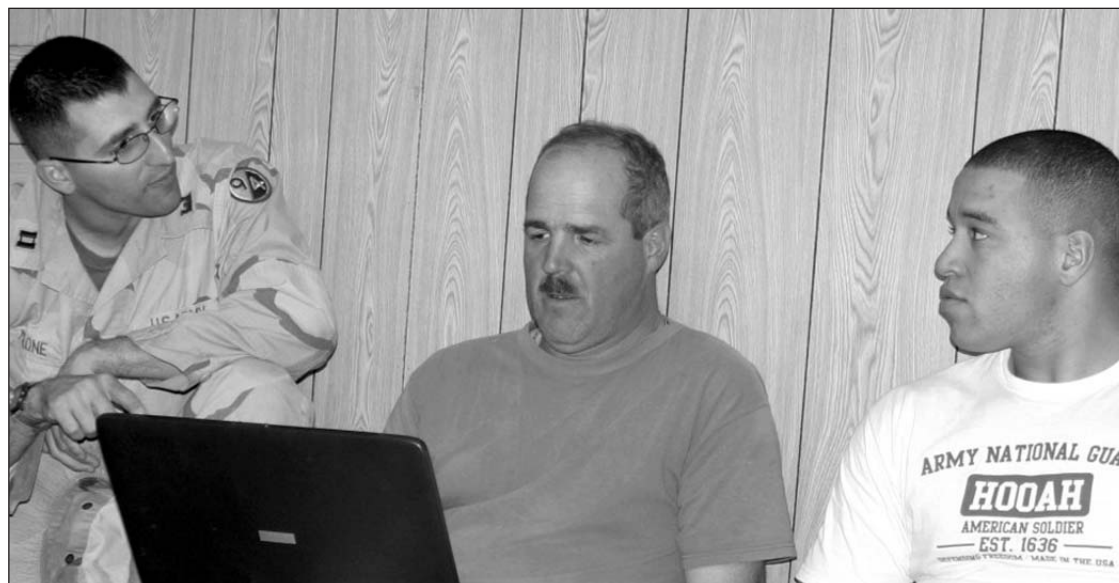


Capt. James DeFeo teaches Ethics and Criminal Justice to students in a tent in Truckville, Camp Arifjan, during off-duty hours at night.

ways for troops to take certification exams. He has found a testing location in Kuwait City, and is looking into the possibility of getting a testing center on base.

Soldiers with bachelor's degrees can also become teach-

ers. Central Texas College is accepting applications for FAST and ASEP course instructors. These courses are to help Soldiers raise their GT score for new career opportunities and to better their management skills.

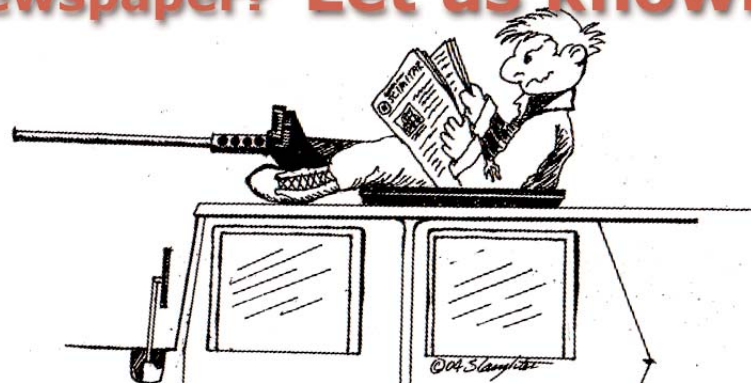


Capt. Michael Malone talks to a couple students about the finer points of networking in the computer class he instructs at Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.



Some souvenirs available for sale at the many kiosks and bazaars throughout Iraq are prohibited for transport back to the United States. Customs officials will confiscate certain knives and decorative "hookah" pipes. To save time and trouble when you redeploy, ask your unit APO mail specialist before attempting to mail or carry anything home from Iraq.

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Desert Storm Veterans Work in Iraq 13 Years After Saudi Deployment

Story and photo by
Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Williams
506th Air Expeditionary
Group public affairs

KIRKUK AIR BASE - When Saddam Hussein ordered his forces to march south through Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990, little did he know of the resolve of the young airmen who would rise to the occasion to repulse the attack.

Airman First Class Steven Sepeda, Senior Airmen Darrell Wiedenbeck, Elbert Bemby and Edward Timberman were young A-10 crew chiefs, and Staff Sgt. Benjamin Hoover was an A-10 weapons loader. They worked out of the King Fahd International Airport in Saudi Arabia together, as members of the 23rd Combined Aircraft Maintenance Squadron from Nov. 1990 to May 1991.

Still working on A-10 aircraft 13 years later, this particular "band of brothers" is stationed together here at Kirkuk Air Base, Iraq, to finish the job they so diligently started over a decade ago.

The then-young airmen have since gained in rank and responsibility, and are now charged with leading the future generation of aircraft maintainers.

Airmen Sepeda and Timberman are now technical sergeants, Airmen Wiedenbeck and Bemby are master sergeants, and Sergeant Hoover is now a senior master sergeant. All are deployed with the 354th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz.

During a recent reunion of the five sergeants, they had a lot to remember.

Most of them had a laugh when they remembered then-Airman Sepeda polishing his

boots on the C-141 aircraft prior to landing in Saudi Arabia. Once on the ground, the boots got dirty and all the work went to waste.

All of them remember the fright they had when the scud missiles started flying.

"I saw the scud missile that hit the bunker in Dhahran," recalled Sergeant Sepeda, who was only a few miles away at the time.

"We started getting hit shortly after that because a CNN reporter tipped off our A-10 location. Before that, the scuds were just going overhead," said Sergeant Wiedenbeck.

They laugh about some of the antics that occurred back then, but know the uncertainty of the situation gave them a greater seriousness, especially in bunker dives.

"During the first scud attack, the sirens scared me so bad that I just put on my gas mask," said Sergeant Timberman. "I just got out of bed, put my mask on and ran to the bunker in my underwear. I was later instructed to put my pants on."

The experience didn't come without certain highlights.

"Timberman and I were under an aircraft listening to President Bush on the radio as the first wave of the attack was coming back," Sergeant Bemby remarked. "We were scared but not afraid. I was a young dude then."

Sergeant Bemby also recalled his daily lunch routine then.

"I was known as PBJ because I ate two peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for lunch each day for six months," he said. "I haven't eaten peanut butter since I left Desert Storm."

None of them have forgotten the oil fires of Kuwait either.

Sergeant Sepeda remembered, "It was like an eclipse.



Band of Brothers - From left: Tech. Sgt. Edward Timberman, Master Sgt. Elbert Bemby, Senior Master Sgt. Benjamin Hoover, Master Sgt. Darrell Wiedenbeck and Tech. Sgt. Steven Sepeda pose for a photo near one of the A-10 aircraft here. The five A-10 maintainers served in both Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom during their careers, first as young airmen and later as senior NCOs.

The sun was up but couldn't come through."

Despite the camaraderie, friendship, humorous experiences, uncertainty and the dedication to work, all members still feel the loss of their friend and colleague, 1st Lt. Patrick B. "Ole" Olson.

Flying an A-10 reconnaissance mission over Kuwait on Feb. 27, 1991, the lieutenant faced some bad weather and was hit by a surface-to-air missile. He tried landing with only one engine and no hydraulics, when the aircraft landing gear collapsed upon landing and flipped. Lieutenant Olson, a 26-year old native of Washington, N.C., was killed in the mishap.

Sergeant Hoover was affected by Lieutenant Olson's loss more than the rest.

"Ole brought me mail and a pair of gloves that day. He always took care of us. He was a good friend," Sergeant Hoover said. "That day I watched him die. I watched him crash. I was told, 'You're his family. Go pick him up.' And I did."

Sergeant Timberman also reflected on his loss.

"I never knew what it was like to lose a friend or family member until that point," he said. "It was the first time I lost someone I knew. It still impacts me today."

Looking to the future, Sergeant Hoover believes that

the training of the previous generation impacts the current one.

"We are gliding on the successes that Vietnam gave us," he said. "We wanted to make our predecessors proud. We had to work to be the best. Laser guided bombs and other high tech weaponry was borne in Vietnam. We got to use them in Desert Storm. It made us look like heroes."

"What I learned from Desert Storm prepared me well for the rest of my career," he added. "I've got some great guys. These guys wanted to come to Iraq with me. There's no limit to the talent that we brought over here."

After 13 years of uncertainty over the future of Iraq since Operation Desert Shield began in 1990, the five 354th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron members are happy to be here.

"We thought it would have been the end of the Iraq situation during Desert Storm," Sergeant Bemby said. "We never thought we'd be back. Hopefully this time, this will be it."

Sergeant Sepeda added, "I think there is a sense of urgency for Iraq and this whole operation in the eyes of the American public and for many of us. It has dragged on for 13 years. I think people are getting tired of this and want it to be over with."

Sergeant Wiedenbeck remarked, "We were all disappointed that we didn't get to finish the job back then. We understood the politics of the situation."

"I'm glad we are a part of Operation Iraqi Freedom," he added, "especially being here when Saddam Hussein was captured. On Dec. 13, our alert A-10s launched shortly after our scheduled aircraft sorties. For security reasons, we are not able to verify the exact reasons for their mission or their location, but in our hearts we firmly believe our A-10s were overhead protecting our Army brethren during the capture of the Ace of Spades, Saddam Hussein."

It's great to now be 150 miles north of Baghdad, since we couldn't finish the job 13 years ago. We're all glad we had a second opportunity to come and finish the job."

He concluded, "This is one last hurrah for the five of us. This situation is resolved here."

Sergeant Timberman summed up the feelings for the group when he said, "In three to four years this will be the end of a generation, the end of an era. We just hope the airmen of tomorrow can carry the baton. We hope to be able to watch television and hear of the good things coming out of the troops we're training now. That will be our biggest test."